

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 EA-10 NEA-09 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 IO-10 NSCE-00 SAM-01 SAJ-01 NIC-01

EB-07 AID-05 COME-00 LAB-04 SIL-01 AF-06 ACDA-10

TRSE-00 /142 W

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9672

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

USLO PEKING

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION OECD PARIS

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

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SUBJECT: FOREIGN POLICY DEBATE MARCH 26

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1. GENERALLY RESTRAINED FOREIGN POLICY DEBATE IN COMMONS

MARCH 26 DEALT MAINLY WITH EC MEMBERSHIP, US-EUROPEAN TIES, MIDDLE EAST, SHELEPIN VISIT, AND RELATIONS WITH DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. HIGHLIGHTS FOLLOW:

2. EC MEMBERSHIP. FOREIGN SECRETARY CALLAGHAN, IN HIS OPENING STATEMENT FOR THE GOVERNMENT, CHOSE TO SKIP OVER THIS ISSUE, SAYING HE WOULD SAVE HIS AMMUNITION FOR THE TWO-DAY DEBATE DUE AFTER THE EASTER RECESS. HIS DEPUTY, DAVID ENNALS, HOWEVER, IN WINDING UP FOR THE GOVERNMENT MADE A STRONG PITCH FOR CONTINUED MEMBERSHIP. TO BARRACKING FROM LABOR ANTI-MARKETEERS, HE SAID A DECISION TO QUIT WOULD SERIOUSLY DAMAGE BRITAIN'S PROSPECTS OF ECONOMIC RECOVERY. REGINALD MAUDLING, MAKING HIS DEBUT AT THE DESPATCH BOX AS SHADOW FOREIGN SECRETARY, ARGUED FOR CONTINUED MEMBERSHIP, MORE ON POLITICAL THAN ECONOMIC GROUNDS. HE NOTED THAT BOTH US AND COMMONWEALTH LEADERS HAD MADE CLEAR THEY WANT BRITAIN TO REMAIN IN.

3. US-EUROPEAN TIES. CALLAGHAN REITERATED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT'S POLICY WAS TO WORK FOR A CLOSE AND HEALTHY PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN EUROPE AND THE US. HE GOT NO ARGUMENT ON THIS SCORE, ALTHOUGH SEVERAL CONSERVATIVE SPEAKERS DID EXPRESS CONCERN THAT PROPOSED UK DEFENSE CUTS MIGHT ADVERSELY AFFECT NATO.

4. MIDDLE EAST. CALLAGHAN PAID TRIBUTE TO SECRETARY KISSINGER'S EFFORTS TO BRING PEACE TO THE MIDDLE EAST, AND SAID THE COMMONS SHARED HIS DISAPPOINTMENT OVER THE OUTCOME OF HIS LATEST TRIP TO THE AREA. CALLAGHAN HINTED THAT THE TIME MIGHT SOON BE RIGHT FOR RESUMPTION OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE. MAUDLING AND A NUMBER OF BACKBENCH SPEAKERS SUGGESTED THAT AN EC INITIATIVE, WITH BRITAIN PLAYING A KEY ROLE, MIGHT NOW BE USEFUL.

5. SHELEPIN. CALLAGHAN DEFENDED THE GOVERNMENT'S REFUSAL TO DENY A VISA TO SHELEPIN, BUT UNDER QUESTIONING CONCEDED CANDIDLY THAT IN SUCH MATTERS MINISTERS WERE OCCASIONALLY GUILTY OF APPLYING DOUBLE STANDARDS.

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MAUDLING DEPLORED THE VISIT.

6. PRODUCER-CONSUMER RELATIONS. CALLAGHAN SAID THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES SHOULD RECEIVE ASSURANCES FROM THE INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES -- AND HE GAVE SUCH AN ASSURANCE ON BEHALF OF HMG -- THAT THEY WOULD SEEK WAYS TO DISTRIBUTE THE WEALTH OF THE WORLD MORE EQUITABLY. INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES, HE SAID, NEEDED SECURITY OF SUPPLIES AT REASONABLE PRICES, AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES NEEDED SECURITY IN THEIR EARNINGS. HE EXPECTED THE

COMMONWEALTH LEADERS TO DISCUSS THIS BROAD SUBJECT AT THE FORTHCOMING MEETING IN KINGSTON. THIS SECTION OF CALLAGHAN'S PRESENTATION ELICITED LITTLE RESPONSE DURING THE DEBATE.

7. PORTUGAL. CALLAGHAN STRESSED THAT VIOLENCE AND OTHER RESTRAINTS ON LEGITIMATE POLITICAL RIGHTS HAVE NO PLACE IN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY. IT WAS IMPORTANT, HE SAID, THAT THE APRIL 25 ELECTIONS SHOULD BE HELD IN A CALM ATMOSPHERE.

8. CHINA. CALLAGHAN ANNOUNCED THAT SOME PRC MINISTERS WOULD BE VISITING BRITAIN LATER THIS YEAR, AND THAT HE EXPECTED TO VISIT CHINA NEXT YEAR.

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